

Introduction I wrote and read for the Abraham Lincoln Impresonator that went to the City of Washington's Grade Schools on February 10th. The sponsors include: National City Bank, City of Washington, Washington Historical Society, Washington Chamber of Commerce, Washington Area Grade School Districts, Deiters Funeral Home, Courier Publishing Company, Lindy's Downtown Market, Russell's Cycling & Fitness, Denhart Baking Company, Don Gronewald, & John C. Ackerman.

Lincoln Introduction

Good morning/afternoon students. Your speaker this morning is considered one of the, if not the, most influential Americans ever to lead this country. While his actions in office happened a long time ago, the nation today is still feeling the effects of his leadership.

Your speaker today was born in a one-room log cabin on February 12th, 1809, in Hardin County, Kentucky. His parents were uneducated farmers. Mainly self-educated, his formal education consisted of only 18 months of school. He worked on riverboats, in a grocery store, as a land surveyor, as a lawyer and finally as a political official.

On a personal note, I have always looked to your guest speaker today as a source of inspiration. Some believe that success comes through a straight rise to the top, one without setbacks and miss-directions.

Your guest speaker today did not have an easy ride to the top. In 1832 he ran for Illinois State Legislator, his first political attempt, and was overwhelmingly defeated. Two years later he ran again and this time won the elected position. But than in 1838 lost his bid for leader of that organization. In 1843 he campaigned for a seat in the US Congress and lost. Three years later he ran again and won, only to serve one term before choosing not to run for re-election in the face of certain defeat. In 1855, he ran for US Senate and lost. In 1856 he failed to gain election to be his political parties Vice Presidential candidate. In 1859 he once again ran for US Senate, this time against Judge Stephan Douglas, and once again he lost. Anyone see a pattern here. That is not what we call a winning record; not what we call at first glance a record of achievement.

Look at any of great American leaders and you will find many faults of character, many political career setbacks, many bad choices and reasons to criticize. What you will find is that they are human; regular citizens just like you and me. Maybe one of you here today will choose to become our next great leader. Maybe it is going to be your teacher, or the principal, or the local firefighter, the mailman, the factory worker, the local attorney. That is the greatness of America; everyone and anyone has the chance to be a leader in this country.

As for your guest speaker today, the one that failed in his many attempts to lead; In 1860 he was elected President of the United States and has gone down in history as one of the most quoted, most read about and studied, most inspirational leaders our country has been blessed to have lead.

Without further ado, please stand for the Sixteenth President of the United States and fellow Illinoisan, ladies and gentleman, Abraham Lincoln.